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27 April 1979

TRANSLATIONS ON NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA  
(FOUO 17/79)

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ALGERIA

COMPLETION OF BETHIOUA LNG PLANT PROJECTED

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 16 Mar 79 p 680

[Text] The first technical tests with steam on the new complex for liquifaction of natural gas, the GNL 2 at Bethioua (Arzew), will begin in July 1980. The first delivery of natural gas will be made before the end of the same year.

The production from the new complex, with relation to that of GNL 1, destined solely to the North American market (Sonatrach-El Paso) will be reserved to a large extent for the European market (France, England, Sweden, Belgium, Germany, etc.).

This is what the APS [Algerian Press Service], the Algerian Agency, divulges. This agency brings up to date its report on the work of GNL 2, whose first stone was laid by President Boumediene a year ago on 21 February 1978. This was at the same time that the GNL 1 complex was inaugurated (cf. MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS for 10 March 1978, page 711). The first tank load of 100,000 cubic meters from the GNL 2 liquifaction complex needed only nine months to be entirely finished. The whole number of the storage tanks, seven in all including three for LNG and four others for butane, propane and gasoline, will be delivered by the Japanese company responsible for the works before November of this year.

The conception of the GNL 2 complex is identical to that of GNL 1. Since it was put into operation, GNL 1 has already loaded 41 methane ships of 125,000 cubic meters capacity, including the Larbi Ben M'Hidi, through the port of Arzew El-Djedid, the first unit of the CNAN [expansion unknown] to take part in the freighting of LNG to the coasts of the United States.

According to Mr Bensaid, director of GNL 1, the planning for this year anticipates the loading through the port of Arzew of 125 methane ships of 125,000 cubic meters capacity or the rotating service of 11 ships, of which 9 belong to the American company El Paso and 2, the Larbi Ben M'Hidi and the Ben Boulaïd, belong to the national company, the CNAN.

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The GNL 1 complex has a capacity of 10.5 billion cubic meters per year; since the sixth train was put into service last December, the complex has been working at 65 percent of that capacity.

The GNL 2 complex will also have a capacity of 10.5 billion cubic meters of gas coming from the Hassi R'Mel deposit whence it will be conveyed by a 42-inch gasoduct now under construction. The plant will operate six identical liquifaction trains which have been designed for autonomous functioning. The two first exchanges will arrive in April and will be unloaded for the first time in the service port of Arzew El-Djedid. This operation, which was done earlier in the oil port of Arzew, required an enormous mobilization of transport without forgetting, of course, the study of routes for the purpose of avoiding all the problems that might interfere with traffic. The unloading of equipment which will be done as of next April in the port of Arzew El-Djedid will ensure a considerable increase in the time available for constructing the nearby dockyard.

With relation to GNL 1, after it goes into service before the end of the year 1980, GNL 2 is scheduled to recover propane (380,000 tons per year), butane (330,000 tons per year) and gasoline (220,000 tons per year). The Bethouia installations, starting in the year 1980, will also permit chilling the methane ships in the port of Arzew El-Djedid, specifically ships belonging to the CNAN. Formerly this operation required spending foreign exchange in foreign ports.

The products derived from GNL 2 will be stored in three storage tanks of 100,000 cubic meters capacity each, two other storage tanks of 50,000 cubic meters each for propane and butane, and finally two 14,500 cubic meter tanks for storing the gasoline. The equipment for storing natural gas that GNL 1 and GNL 2 have available will be closely connected among themselves.

(We recall that a third factory for liquifying natural gas, GNL 3, is programmed for Arzew. The equipment for the installations has been ordered from a Franco-Italian consortium, Technip/SNAM [expansion unknown/National Gas Pipeline Company] Progetti-France, cf. MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS for 26 January 1979, page 189.)

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ALGERIA

BRIEFS

GUIDED MISSILE PATROL BOAT--The Algerian Navy has just received delivery of a fifth Soviet OSA-I class guided missile patrol boat; it therefore has five OSA-I's, three OSA-II's and six Komar's. [Text] [Paris DEFENSE CONJONCTURE in French 20 Mar 79 p 3]

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IRAN

LOYALTY OF SHAH'S ARMY--THE CRUCIAL FACTOR

Hamburg STERN in German 4 Jan 79 pp 86-89

[Article by STERN reporter Lionel van der Meulen: "The Bayonets of the Shah"]

[Text] Only the army keeps the shah still on the throne. High pay and an ingenious system of informers are supposed to prevent the soldiers from deserting to the enemy--to the people. But now the enemies of the shah are paying for every deserter.

Again and again Hekmat Yazdan looks at the door. He is always interrupting his explanations, sometimes in the middle of a sentence. Time and again he strokes his shiny black crew cut from front to back with his broad hand and feels his 3-day growth of beard. Hekmat Yazdan is afraid to be recognized by members of the shah's army: Hekmat Yazdan is a deserter.

We are sitting in a corner of a rest house along the street to Qom, alone in the parlor of an inn that is at least 300 square meters. On the stone floor are bread crumbs, cigarette butts, and now and then a gnawed chicken bone. On the shabby RESOPAL-TOP of our tottering table are plates with sheep's-milk cheese and round flat bread, a pot of tea and glasses.

Hekmat Yazdan does not touch anything. He hides himself in his black sportsjacket made of coarse material and too large for him. The 20-year-old does not know yet whether to act proud and bold. Without concentration he tells his story: "I am from Shiraz, spent a year in the army and was a shah-worshipper--a follower of the emperor. But I am a Shiite and cannot shoot at my brothers. Shar'iatmadari and Khomeyni have forbidden it. Our lieutenant said that they are playing into the hands of the communists and that Khomeyni is a homosexual. But I believed my brothers in the street more. Three days ago, I went to the Ayatollah\* Shar'iatmadari in Qom and gave him my rifle. It was a good German rifle."

\* The "ayatollahs" (literally: "Word of God") Khomeyni and Shar'iatmadari are the spiritual leaders of the Shiite Muslims in Iran.

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The spiritual leader, who accepted the G-3 rifle, gave the deserter 2,500 toman (DM 700)--as a premium for deserting. In Iran every deed has its price.

The "mullahs," the learned men, during the past few weeks have had to reach deeper into their pockets: About 100 soldiers and officers thus far have refused to follow the orders of the military government and move with tanks, rifles and bayonets against their demonstrating fellow believers and political friends. It is the beginning of a wave of desertion whose extent cannot yet be perceived. If it continues, the shah must fear for his throne. For the power of the emperor, who is being wished to hell by his subjects, stands and falls with the army.

For the time being the air force, the navy and ground troops represent imposing armed forces, bristling with weapons. As yet the officer corps stands united behind its commander-in-chief, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. As yet the overwhelming majority of the soldiers are keeping the oath of loyalty to the emperor. As yet no one is visible in the ranks of the military who could topple the emperor from the peacock throne and himself assume power--in the way the shah's father himself did it in 1925. A Persian general, who asked to remain anonymous, told STERN: "We soldiers are very powerful, but as yet we don't know how to govern exactly. Perhaps that will be another 2 years."

But even then it is not certain that they actually want to rule. For the Iranian military have no reason to complain about the shah. On the contrary: He has spoiled them--not without self-interest--more than his own family. Within a period of the 37 years of his regency, the shah has made the hopeless heap of soldiers who in 1941 suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of an Anglo-Soviet army, into a troop that is 413,000 men strong--equipped with the latest achievements of the international armaments industry.

To the ground troops, the ruler of the country gave 2,200 tanks, especially the very modern Chieftain tanks from Great Britain, as well as DM 200 million worth of trucks, jeeps and guns from the Soviet Union.

During the past two decades, the navy was equipped with 30 warships and the largest fleet of hydrofoil boats in the world. The air force, the special darling of the shah, has at its disposal the latest models. Reza Pahlavi, who himself holds a pilot's license, cultivates a cordial friendship with Tom Jones, the boss of the U. S. Northrop aircraft firm. From it and other U. S. firms, the hobby pilot has purchased more than 700 fighter airplanes and transport aircraft. The seven highly complicated jets of the air surveillance system AWACS now on order alone cost approximately DM 2.4 billion.

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Thanks to the oil revenues, the shsh has made available more than DM 75 billion for military equipment during the last 20 years. Not infrequently he became the victim in this connection of low American salesmanship. Thus the helicopter pilots are now tormenting themselves with an expensive and sensitive piece of equipment that was designed for bad weather, which in this sun-spoiled country is completely superfluous. The American Rockwell International armaments firm palmed an expensive electronic border surveillance system off on the "Light of the Aryana" --a system which cost millions and was no good. The coup of the U. S. salesmen had consequences: In August of 1976 three leading employees of Rockwell International were driving through Teran. Suddenly a red VW bus drove sideways in front of them. A group of terrorists leaped from the vehicle and shot at the managers with Polish automatic pistols. All three died.

The officers of the Iranian army are angry about the influence and arrogance of the American allies. A former air force pilot to STERN: "In my training camp in the United States, the Americans treated me like a second-class human being." The "Yonkees" (the Iranians pronounce the "a" like an "o"), to be sure, are still not hated as much as the former occupiers from the USSR.

Training abroad is a matter of tradition with the Persian army. Many old generals were whipped into shape by the German Wehrmacht, many Persian admirals by Italian colleagues. Only during the last 20 years, officers of all arms, were almost exclusively drilled in the United States--to the indignation of the officers, who possessed a high degree of national consciousness and a strong orientation toward Europe.

But as yet the officers stand behind the emperor. Many of them come from population groups which in the official statistics figure as insignificant minorities: Armenians, Bahais or Kurds. They are provided with high pay: about DM 4,000 per month for a lieutenant, close to DM 12,000 for a general. Modern houses, their own servants, their own hospitals and army stores in which all the goods of this world can be purchased duty-free, are taken for granted. The same goes for official cars and interest-free loans.

An Iranian officer lives well, even if he is carefully observed: All three armed services are controlled by their own secret services. They in turn are supervised by a special intelligence service which works only for the shah. The emperor has forbidden all generals to meet outside of the service without his permission. Every visit of a provincial commander to Teheran must be approved by him. Every promotion above major can only be made by the Shah. This the father of the people does very thoroughly: he studies every personnel file and invites the candidates for a personal interview in the palace. A colonel to STERN: "I believe he has created the most elaborate control system in the world. He has us fully in his grip."

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The lower charges, too, are kept in check by the emperor following the principle of "carrot and stick." In addition to free accommodation and good food, a simple soldier earns about DM 800 per month, a sergeant about DM 2,000. That is many times the average per capita income in Iran of approximately DM 370 per month.

In the infantry, which is composed of conscripts and professional soldiers, the Shah-followers from the minority groups of the Iranian population constitute the majority as well, although according to official statistics 66 percent of the Iranian population are Persians and 34 percent members of other nationalities. "These statistics are falsified to justify the dominating position of the Persians and thus of the emperor's family," a high Iranian official told me. "An honest census of the population would reveal that the Persians account for only 35 percent of the population. And in that case their claim for domination would be endangered."

The lack of trust of the different tribes and races in the army is reinforced by additional religious differences. Hekmat Yazdan, who deserted in the city of Qom reported of leaflets circulating in the barracks which warn all non-Shiite soldiers: "If a Christian or Bahai dares to shoot at a Shiite demonstrator, he will be executed by one of our brothers in the army."

That is not an empty threat: A lieutenant who belonged to the Bahai sect a short time ago was shot by an officer in Tabriz because he had ordered his men to fire at approaching demonstrators.

Persians belonging to the Jewish faith, too, should have to serve in the army. However, there are enough barrack commanders who will be persuaded by an appropriate baksheesh to excuse the Jewish conscript from the service.

On the other hand, the air force especially needs many Israelis in order to be able to take care of the maintenance work on the complicated fighter planes. Thus absurd situations arise: Every day three El-Al planes leave Tehran Airport, packed full of Jewish refugees for Tel Aviv. In return, three other El-Al planes land, filled to the last seat with technicians of the Israeli army. The experts are for the most part Persian Jews who emigrated years ago and have perfect command of the language of the country, Farsi. "This is the dilemma with our army: We are still by far too much dependent on the assistance of the Americans, the British and the Israelis," a retired general in Tehran explained to STERN.

But the dependence on foreign knowhow does not diminish the power position within the country. Even before martial law was proclaimed in some cities in August and September and the military government was installed in November, the generals had taken over all positions of governors, the most important mayoral positions, the chief seat of the SAVAK secret service and the key ministries. Military courts dominated the legal system.

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The military have an important influence on agricultural policy, the educational system, and the public health service.

As yet the soldiers of all three armed services repeat during every reveille their vow to "Khoda, Shah, Mihan" (God, Shah, Fatherland). The deserter Hekmat Yazdan, who has made a decision for "Khoda" and "Mihan," is still the exception. In return he conducts himself all the more wildly. When we said farewell in the rest house on the road to Qom, he said: "Our commander told us again and again that there are three types of enemies: First, enemies, second, the friends of enemies, and third, the enemies of friends. For me this shah is all three at once."

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IRAN

'KEIZAI SHINBUN' INTERVIEWS IRANIAN DEPUTY PREMIER ENTEZAM

Tokyo NIHON KEIZAI SHINBUN in Japanese 9 Apr 79 Morning Edition p 5 OW

[Interview with Deputy Prime Minister A. Entezam by Konishi, on 8 April 1979]

[Text] Teheran, 8 Apr--Iranian Deputy Prime Minister Entezam granted this NIHON KEIZAI SHINBUN reporter (correspondent Konishi) an exclusive interview on 8 April, during which Entezam expressed his views on various problems facing the new post-referendum Iran. The deputy prime minister said: "The first stage of the Iranian revolution has just been completed, and we must speed up the construction of a new state system. There is no cause for misgiving about relations between Japan and Iran." The following is the gist of his remarks:

--In the recent referendum, 99.5 percent of the people voted for the establishment of an Islamic republic. Despite differences in race and religion, our people are united under Ayatollah Khomeyni. It is quite natural, in a sense, for the minorities who have hitherto been oppressed to make various demands. Most of these demands will be met.

--A body of religious leaders is now drawing up a general framework for the new Islamic republic. When the work is completed, the government will review it before making it public. The royal government under Pahlavi used to say that there would be a conflict between religion and scientific progress under an Islamic republic. But there is no such conflict. Islam takes in everything. We intend to prove that Iran is such a broadminded country.

--The Iranian revolution merely has gone through its first stage. We are hurrying to cleanse our country of the vices of the old rule. We will shortly present the draft of a new constitution and plan to hold elections for constitutional parliament on 1 June.

--A new economic policy will be announced in the near future. We will not carry on the old policy; the new economic policy will be an Islamic one. Issues concerning the entry of foreign firms and the introduction of foreign funds and technicians will be covered by the new policy. We will allow in whatever Iran needs. Recently, some false reports were circulating which

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said that foreign workers would be required to leave Iran by 21 June. The new regulation requiring foreign workers to obtain work and domiciliary permits effective in June was thus mistakenly represented.

--In the past 4 years, Iran spent \$15 billion in aid to developing nations, overseas investments, and credit to foreign countries. We are studying the possibility of recalling part of our foreign investments. We are also reviewing our aid program for developing nations. However, we will continue to invest in projects beneficial to Iran, like our investment in Krupp, a West German firm.

At present, economic activities in Iran are virtually at a standstill, accentuating the unemployment problem. When the agricultural development plan and the investment in public works plan take concrete shape, they will absorb a considerable number of unemployed.

--(Shah) Pahlavi's policy of making Iran play the role of "policeman of the Persian Gulf" was quite futile. As Ayatollah Khomeyni said: We will abandon our role of policeman of the Persian Gulf. We will endeavor to strengthen our friendly relations with neighboring countries and achieve regional stability and development. The Soviet Union was not a threat in the past, and we will continue to maintain our friendly relations with it. We will maintain our relations not only with the Soviet Union but also with the United States and China.

As for our relations with Japan, they have never been bad and we have never been uneasy about them. We want to develop relations between our two countries even further.

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ISRAEL

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ISRAELI SECRET AGENTS LIST--Khomeyni has given to Yasir 'Arafat a list of MOSSAD (Israeli Secret Service) agents working in the Arab countries. The list belonged to the SAVAK [Iranian Secret Service]. In the course of a closed meeting of the National Palestinian Council, the PLO leader promised to reveal the agents' names. [Text] [Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French No 953, 11 Apr 79 p 30]

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LIBYA

BRIEFS

ATOMIC BOMB--The presence of Pakistani atomic technicians in the Fezzan Desert has started some rumors flying again concerning the chance of a possible atomic bomb test by Libya. A date has even been mentioned: sometime this month. Colonel Qadhdhafi has for several years been saying that he wants to provide his country with the atomic bomb. He has suggested to several Asian countries that an exchange be arranged: their technology for Libya's petroleum. Moreover, Libya claims the northern parts of Chad and Niger, regions that have uranium deposits. The Aozou area of Chad has been occupied for nearly 4 years by Libyan forces. [Text] [Paris VALEURS ACTUELLES in French 2 Apr 79 p 35]

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TUNISIA

UNITY APPEAL OF MILITANT OPPOSITION ISSUED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 19 Mar-1 Apr 79 pp 24, 25

[Statement by militant group: "Tunisia: for Unity of Action"]

[Text] A group of Tunisian militants, disturbed by the evolution of the situation in their country and the lack of coordination of the different kinds of action in opposition to the regime, have issued the following appeal, in the hope that it will arouse wide-ranging debate leading to unity of action among different wings of the Tunisian opposition.

Although the Destourian regime in Tunisia retains--but for how much longer?--the appearances of power, it has surely lost the foundations of it, which have been eroded by nearly a quarter-century of repression against the popular movement as a whole and in all its component parts. The rupture has never been greater or deeper within this regime which was born of violence and which seeks to perpetuate itself only by violence against the Tunisian people. The reassuring declarations by Hedi Nouira or Mohamed Sayah on the future and the prospects of Bourguibism will do nothing for them: they have neither future nor prospects. They are feeling their way along, and they are living their isolation like a Calvary. Their feigned assurance is only the reflection of their real anguish, lived from day to day, in the face of a reality which they are trying in vain to exorcise by words. In fact, authority is already slipping away from their government, which has resigned in favor of the rival clans who are disputing the post-Bourguibism period among themselves in the shade of their harems and with total and contemptuous ignorance of the popular masses and their aspirations. Each clan for itself--and for its imperialist backers.

The friends of the regime do not deceive themselves, and still less do its enemies. To both, it appears a little like the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the century, the "sick man" of the Maghreb.

The outcome of this battle of clans remains uncertain, and its evolutions and consequences, unforeseeable. Anything could come out of this upset Pandora's

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box: militarism, fascism--or at least, more distinct forms of it--civil war, and one does not know what else. Foreign intervention, perhaps. There is no need to dramatize a situation which is already highly dramatic in itself. But it is important for all Tunisian militants to be aware of these possibilities and to take account of the degeneracy of the Bourguiban political system, so that all of them together--parties, groups, movements, tendencies, and individuals in the Tunisian opposition--can try to spare our people the tragic shocks of this frantic race to power and of the ambitions of unscrupulous men who have already proved what kind of repression they are capable of.

The massacres of Black Thursday, 26 January 1978, the first anniversary of which we have just celebrated--each, unfortunately, within his own clique--only confirmed the fact that the "liberal opening" attributed to Hedi Nouira was conditioned on submission by the popular masses and their representative organizations to the neocolonial strategy set in motion in 1970.

The Seeds of Fascism

They also confirmed, in the bloody way that we know, that the seeds of fascism sown at the time of the 1969 coup de force had sprouted and that the formidable machinery of coercion, compulsion and repression could thenceforth function at full power. The political trials preceding Black Thursday, the many operations by the police and the army against the schools and enterprises, were only intermittent practices to break in the men and try out the assault units.

What must be emphasized today, a year later, is that on that day, in the face of the Destourian armed force's determination to nip the reviving trade-union movement in the bud, there could be no place either for "restrained behavior" (the liberals' fixation) or for any form of adventurism. It was necessary quite simply to take one's part in these popular struggles which had just broken out on trade-union ground. The way events went was unsatisfactory for both sides, who displayed singular indifference to or revolutionary scorn for what seemed to them to be "battles of machines"--without realizing that there was a lot of action offstage: the struggles by thousands of workers determined to seize their rights and confront the employers' power and its political expression in the government, even with empty hands. The lesson will be valid for the future too. For this chapter of the errors of certain groups in the Tunisian opposition will not be closed by their belated rallying to the trade unionists in struggle, a rallying quite often camouflaged by irresponsibly inflated criticism at the expense of all those who have died for having believed in the struggle and those who are rotting in the Destourian power's jails because they did not desert the battlefield.

Something, in short, needs to be understood: support for the legitimate leadership of the UGTT [Tunisian General Federation of Labor] until flouted trade-union legality is reestablished can be neither "tactical" nor "circumstantial," as was recently declared, as naively as can be imagined, by an opposition group.

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While mechanistic concepts of men and the environment in which they move sometimes lead to crude schematism, which no longer has any currency, it is necessary to reaffirm unambiguously that support for the legitimate leadership of the UGTT--presently in prison--must be the foundation of any unitary approach to the combat which we must carry forward for autonomy of the trade-union organization and the overthrow of the puppet clique which has been installed in Place Mohammed-Ali.

It is not a question of support for one man or one group of men, but of defense of a principle which has its permanent implications for the struggle which we are carrying on. It is likewise necessary to affirm that the search for unity of action--a necessary and urgent search, without any doubt--must have no other objective than to prepare the ground for an alternative to the regime in place in Tunisia, with respect for political pluralism and submission to the popular verdict, and not, as some suggest, for forming a front for dialogue with the Destourian power.

States General

Despite its errors and its mistakes, its inexperience, the subjectivism, the voluntarism and all the blemishes which characterize the lack of preparation of one group or another, the popular movement in Tunisia and its representative organizations have progressed considerably in the content and substance of their political analyses and the forms and means of their struggles. They have a common program, unwritten, which is explicitly articulated with the idea that the continuation of Bourguibism, with or without Bourguiba, has become a scandal which serves neither the oppressed Tunisian people nor the national liberation struggles in the world, particularly in Africa and the Arab world, nor the popular forces in the Maghreb, nor--even more so--socialism wherever it may be.

They also have a minimal program of action for defense of democratic liberties, general and unconditional amnesty for all political prisoners imprisoned or convicted since independence, defense of the autonomy of all national organizations, and political pluralism with all that it implies. Finally, they join in defense of national independence and sovereignty. This is a lot, but not enough. A lot, because rarely, in the difficult conditions of struggle which we know in Tunisia, has the opposition succeeded in defining so many points in common. Not enough, because this program remains unwritten and because the actions, although conceived from the same point of view, are not carried on coherently.

Is it too early (or already too late) to propose a preparatory meeting which would bring together qualified representatives of political organizations or individuals who would organize, in some way, the states general of the Tunisian national democratic and progressive opposition, leading to a common program of unity and action? The idea is perhaps not a new one, but it is time for it to be headed in the right direction again.

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